Cosmetics Advertisements in the Woman’s Magazine *Elle*

*A Comparative Study of Metaphors in the Swedish and English Editions*

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C EXTENDED ESSAY

Cosmetics Advertisements in the Woman’s Magazine Elle:
A Comparative Study of Metaphors in the Swedish and English Editions

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Introduction

Metaphors in advertisements are a powerful and compelling tool - they not only enrich an ad, but also extend the meaning of a textual/visual message, creating multi-levelled layers of interpretation.

The use and choice of metaphors for ads differs from country to country. What seems funny or smart to one reader/viewer might be strange and incomprehensible or even vulgar to a different reader/viewer living in another part of the world. Therefore, before inserting an ad in a magazine in a particular country, producers must take many factors into consideration, for example social, religious, historical and political circumstances of a target group, its common interests and concerns (for example, ads in the magazine ‘ELLE’ are directed to young, well-off, fashionable women, who are concerned with their physical appearance - beauty and well-being). Only if all, or most, of the factors are considered and studied can an ad be successful at creating a positive effect on the reader/viewer.

1. Aim. The purpose of this paper is to compare metaphors utilised in advertisements in the English and Swedish edition of the women’s magazine ‘ELLE’. I will focus mainly on the ads of cosmetics - how the product is presented in the textual element and what part the visual one plays for the reception and interpretation of the overall message of the ad. Due to the fact that metaphors can be used in different ways, a variety of ads will be presented (both Swedish and English) to picture multiple methods of utilising metaphors. Moreover, the issue of translation will be taken up - are advertisements of the same product identical in both editions, and if not, what are the differences (both on the textual and visual level).

2. Method. My method of analysis will be the one used by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Factors studied will be that of highlighting and hiding, cultural adherence, new meaning, personification.

3. Data. In order to study this complex problem I selected advertisements of cosmetics from the November issue of ‘ELLE’ (2005) – the Swedish and the English editions. In order to narrow the scope of available material I have chosen advertisements dealing with perfume, make-up and facial beauty products.
CHAPTER ONE

1. Background

A great deal of research has been devoted to the study of metaphor - both as a phenomenon in itself and its role in advertising and how it is perceived by a reader/viewer. Lakoff and Johnson (‘Metaphors We Live By’, 1980) give a definition of a metaphor as a statement and/or picture, which causes a receiver to experience one thing in terms of another. MacInnis, Moorman and Jaworski (‘Enhancing and Measuring Consumers, Motivation, Opportunity and Ability to Process Brand Information from Ads’, 1991) view metaphor in advertising as a stimulus of deeper levels of processing because of its interest value and because it stimulates curiosity about the product or brand. Philips (‘Thinking Into It: Consumer Interpretation of Complex Advertising Images’, 1997) studied the comprehension of metaphors in advertisements, which differed from the intended by the creator. Stern (‘Metaphor Without Mainsprings: A Rejoinder to Elgin and Scheffler’, 1988), Ward and Gaidis (‘Metaphor in Promotional Communication: A Review of Research on Metaphor Comprehension and Quality’, 1990) studied the effect of metaphor in promotional communication and dealt with models of metaphor comprehension and quality, which were grounded in linguistic and psychological research. Scott (‘Images in Advertising: The Need for a Theory of Visual Rhetoric’, 1994) writes about visual rhetoric. McCabe (‘Conceptual similarity and the quality of metaphor in isolated sentences versus extended contexts’, 1983) made a division of metaphors into concrete and abstract, depending on the degree to which concepts or a comparison between them can be directly experienced. MacKenzie (‘Bibliography and the Sociology of Text’, 1986) took up again the issue of distinction between concrete and abstract metaphors; the concrete ones are experienced through the five senses, and the abstract ones are based on intangible concepts. Kaplan (‘A Conceptual Analysis of Form and Content in Visual Metaphors’, 1992) stated that presenting metaphors in visual form facilitates recall. Heckler, Houston and Childer (‘Measurement of Individual Differences in Visual Versus Verbal Information Processing’, 1985) categorised unexpected and irrelevant advertisements as having negative effects on memory outcomes.

1 All of the examples of research taken from Tom Reichert ‘Message is in the metaphor: Assessing the comprehension of metaphors in advertisements’, Journal of advertising (Winter 1999), www.findarticles.com.
2. The visual versus the textual medium in advertising

2.1 Characteristics of the visual medium in advertising

- The type of culture represented by the women’s magazine ‘ELLE’ can be characterised as ‘visual culture’. As far as advertisements in this magazine are concerned, a visible pattern prevails - a pictorial element as a background, filling the whole page, with a small textual component - the logo of a producer/brand/company, and a minimal message (usually the length of a short sentence) as a reinforcement of the visual element and also of the product itself.

- One of the most prominent features of the visual medium is its multilayered and ambiguous meaning- depending on many factors such as social environment, social status, country of origin, past experience of the viewer/receiver, she/he will interpret the visual message in a particular way. Therefore, there are no clear and unambiguous messages that can be read in the same way all over the world by everyone. The advertiser solves this problem by utilising such methods as advertising the same product in a few different ways depending on the country of origin and the culture/beliefs of the target group.

- Cosmic ornament. Elements of the visual medium in an advertisement can be presented in a variety of ways i.e. a small object can be enlarged to fill the whole page or shrunken; it can be fragmented or repeated, transformed. (Hariman 1998)

- Allegorical coding is ubiquitous in visual media, and women’s magazines are a good example of such ubiquity. In the cosmetic market the use of allegories of beauty, femininity, fragility, success and happiness is extremely popular. The choice of allegory in an advertisement of a product is mainly determined by the focus on a particular target group. In the case of ‘ELLE’, its women are in the age bracket of 20 - 30, with a considerable income and high working position, usually without children, single or in a loose relationship. In order to apply a ‘fitting’ allegory one must consider the two key features of this target group - preoccupation with beauty and wellness (use of expensive beauty products, perfume etc.) and careful choice of fashionable clothing (haute-couture, fashion news, propagation of the most famous designers by the magazine).

- Cultural transformation. Advertisers chose the visual element on the basis of common social assumptions/ideas of beauty i.e. advertisements of cosmetics always show as a reinforcement a picture of a slim, smooth - skinned woman, whose body and face
show perfect proportion and harmony, because this is how female beauty is perceived nowadays. The inclusion of common social ideals and aspirations offered by the mass media codes (beauty, financial success, happiness) into the visual element of an advertisement is widespread; advertisers assume that such reinforcement will produce a positive connotation between the product and the idea, with the product as a means to achieve success represented by the idea\(^2\).

2.2 Characteristics of the textual medium in advertising

- Manipulation of the linguistic material. In order to achieve a particular and unique effect in an ad on the textual level, producers manipulate the textual element. This can be done on the level of words (transformation of a word formant, word or a phrase), sentence level (transformation of a well known proverb, idiom), on the orthographic level (change in spelling), phonetic level (alliteration, rhyming, pronunciation), morphological level (inventing pseudo-morphemes) and lexical level.

- Foregrounding. Harris (1989) in his work *Sell! Buy! Semiolinguistic manipulation in print advertising* states that:

> Foregrounding is a linguistic process in which some elements, such as words, phrases, sentences, stressings, intonations, or the like are given prominence or made more meaningfully significant by the communicator/language-user, in this case the creator(s) of a print advertisement.

- Encoding- decoding. In order for the message in an advertisement to be comprehended a reader/receiver must ‘decode’ a meaning using relevant codes. Decoding includes several stages- recognition and comprehension (this can be called the ‘surface’ meaning), interpretation and evaluation.

Communication between the addresser and addressee can be represented by a model: (based on Corner, 1983)\(^3\)

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\(^2\) For more details on the topic of the visual medium see Robert Hariman (1998), *Visual Media, Allegorical Consciousness, and Postmodern Culture* (Drake University), www.indiana.edu/~rhetid/hariman.htm

\(^3\) For more details on the topic of the textual medium see Alan C. Harris (1989) *Sell! Buy! Semiolinguistic manipulation in print advertising*, (California State University), www.csun.edu/~vcspc005/advertis.html
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Encoding involves: institutional practices
Organizational conditions
Practices of production

Text involves: form and content
Symbolic construction
Arrangement
Performance

Decoding involves: reception/consumption

- **The reading of the text.** (Daniel Chandler *Semiotics for beginners,* Encoding/Decoding, [www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem08c.html](http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem08c.html)):

Hall suggested three hypothetical interpretative codes or positions for the reader of a text:
- **dominant (or ‘hegemonic’) reading:** the reader fully shares the text’s code and accepts and reproduces the preferred reading […]
- **negotiated reading:** the reader partly shares the text’s code and broadly accepts the preferred reading, but sometimes resists and modifies it in a way which reflects their own position, experiences and interests (…), this position involves contradictions.
- **oppositional (‘counter-hegemonic’) reading:** the reader, whose social situation places them in a directly oppositional relation to the dominant code, understands the preferred reading but does not share the text’s code and rejects this reading […]

- **Interpretation of the text (ibid.):**

The interpretation of signs by their users can be seen (…) as having three levels:
- **syntactic:** recognition of the sign (in relation to other signs);
- **semantic:** comprehension of the intended meaning of the sign;
- **pragmatic:** interpretation of the sign in terms of relevance, agreement etc.
3. Selection and categorization of data.

I have selected advertisements from both the Swedish and the English editions of ‘ELLE’ that fall into four categories: perfume, make-up, hair and facial beauty products ads. All of the advertisements consist of a visual and a textual element. In some cases the picture is the dominant part of the ad; sometimes it functions only as a background ‘complementation’ (as is the case with hair products ads).

As far as the Swedish edition of ‘ELLE’ is concerned, I focused on ads that are written in Swedish or translated from English to Swedish (international brands). Of course, apart from the ads in Swedish there are also ads wholly in English – this refers mostly to advertisements of perfume, which are always advertised in English in the Swedish edition.

‘Swedish’ ads can be divided into categories such as:

- ads where the pictorial element prevails
- ads where the textual element prevails
- ads where a joke or a word pun is employed
- ads where some parts of the textual element are kept in English
- ads with a wholly Swedish textual element
- ads of Swedish brands (wholly in Swedish)
- ads of international brands wholly in the Swedish language
- ads where the textual element is almost nonexistent – except for the brand name
- ads with more than just English or Swedish (for example French for French beauty products or make-up)
- ads where a Swedish celebrity is advertising an international brand

Advertisements in the English edition of ‘ELLE’ can be categorized as:

- having a dominant pictorial element
  a) having more than one pictorial element (in one advertisement)
- having a dominant textual element (this applies to hair products in both editions)
- employing a word pun or a pictorial joke
• having more than the English language (French for French products, as in the Swedish edition)
• having only the English language
• having a minimal textual message (the brand name plus approximately three words)
• having a celebrity advertising an international brand

This categorization focuses on the relationship of the textual and pictorial elements. However, another type of division can be based on the role of the metaphor and its place in an advertisement. Therefore, the categories would be:

• ads with only a textual metaphor
• metaphor that comes into being only when the pictorial and the textual elements are combined
• ads with only a pictorial metaphor

Both types of categorization take into account processes studied by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) – highlighting and hiding of certain elements by the use of metaphor, creating a new meaning through a metaphor, personification, cultural adherence (this aspect is very important when comparing Swedish and English advertisements).

I will also present different methods that advertisers utilise in order to catch the attention of a reader/viewer (and of course to make her/him buy the product) like the choice of vocabulary, colours of the pictorial element, choice of similes and personal pronouns, use of foreign languages (French, English), use of jokes and puns, repetitions, use of cosmic ornament (enlarging, shrinking of the visual and textual element) and the possible connotations an advertisement can evoke.

Due to the ‘nature’ of the magazine (‘glossy’), the communication with a reader takes place mostly on the visual level – many pages are wholly covered with advertisements. Moreover, articles are usually accompanied with large pictures that sometimes may take even a few pages. This is why most of the selected advertisements can be called ‘filler ads’ or ‘visual ads’. The only ‘informative ads’ (with a large textual element including detailed information about the product) I found are the ones concerning hair and facial beauty products; a good example of an ‘informative’ ad is an advertisement of a hair dye – with an accurate
description of how to apply the product and what advantages it gives to the user (shiny and healthy hair etc.); another good example can be an ad for an anti-ageing face cream, where one gets information about the approximate time after which wrinkles should ‘disappear’, sometimes even in percentage. Such advertisements possess a high level of informativity because the products they advertise are used not only for ‘special occasions’ or to look ‘glamorous’ but in order to keep ones skin, hair etc. in good and healthy condition every day; in order to do that one needs more detailed information about the effects of a product – the type of skin or hair it is appropriate for, the way of application and its frequency etc.

On the other hand, the least ‘informative’ advertisements are the advertisements for perfume – since the smell of perfume cannot really be described in words, the advertisers resort to metaphoric comparisons and similes. What is interesting is the fact that most of the ads of perfume tell the reader how SHE/HE will feel or be perceived by others (friends, lovers, family etc.) when she/he buys and uses the perfume, instead of saying anything about the smell of the perfume itself! It may be argued that such technique of advertising is quite risky, since the consumer does not really know what exactly she/he is buying. It is the ideology behind the product that is talked about in a commercial/ad and that is crucial and elaborated on by an advertiser in an ad.

Another branch of cosmetics, namely facial products are faced with a different problem – all of the ads of, for example, face creams operate within a limited scope of vocabulary. Therefore, it is hard to invent an advertisement for a new face cream, that would not resemble in any way the ads for products of competitors and that would use totally new vocabulary. The same can be said about the ads for lipsticks or shampoos. The more a product is of everyday use, the harder it is to present it in a totally new way. Advertisers solve this problem by, for example, inviting a well-known person (a movie star or a famous model) to star in a commercial/ad or invent new possible uses for a familiar product to make it look more attractive and better than the one of competitors.

Lately, there can be noticed a tendency to produce shocking and taboo – breaking advertisements. Their aim is to catch the attention of a reader/viewer at all cost, to ‘scream’ from the page of a magazine ‘louder’ than the competitors. This tendency for shocking and taboo – breaking ads can be observed in both the Swedish and the English editions of ‘ELLE’.
There is also one more group of advertisements, which can be called ‘unclear ads’ – this group includes ads that are ambiguous to the point that a reader cannot tell what exactly is being advertised. Such difficulty with decoding might take place when a reader has different life experience or comes from a different culture/part of the world. Every advertisement has a target group at which it is aimed, but when a reader belongs to an out – group, the message of the ad may pose difficulties because of its unclear textual message, unclear visual message, the lack of the name of a producer (or stockholder) or the lack of textual reference to the product (when a product is advertised only visually or when only the name of the brand is given without any textual explanation).

Advertisements present a great variety and there are many possible ways of categorising them. Cosmetic companies constantly search for and invent new methods of selling a product to a consumer, and those methods must suite the member of the target group – a young woman, who has aspirations of being beautiful, exceptional, successful and up-to-date with the latest fashion designs.
4. List of examples

4.1 The advertisements from the Swedish edition of ‘ELLE’

Category I: Advertisements with a celebrity advertising an international product, ‘visual ads’.

- Example (1) Maybelline New York make-up products advertised by Marie Serneholts – singer.

Category II: Advertisements with a dominant textual element, ‘informative ads’.

- Example (1) Scandinavian Formula hair products.
- Example (2) Max Factor ‘Flawless Perfection’ foundation.
- Example (3) Clinique cosmetics – facials.
- Example (4) Clinique cosmetics – lipsticks.
- Example (5) Estee Lauder anti-wrinkle eye cream.
- Example (6) Biotherm anti-wrinkle face cream.
- Example (7) Lancome mascara ‘L’Extreme.

Category III: Advertisements in which a pun or a visual humour is employed.

- Example (1) Nivea Self Tan Lotion.
- Example (2) Perfume for men ‘Armand Basi’.

Category IV: Advertisements of genuine Swedish brands.

- Example (1) Lumene mascara.
- Example (2) Olle & Marie – face and hair styling.
- Example (3) Face Stockholm – make-up salon.

4.2 The advertisements from the English edition of ‘ELLE’

Category I: Advertisements of perfume – the visual element dominates over the textual element, ‘visual ads’.
• Example (1) Advertisement of the Calvin Klein ‘Euphoria’ perfume.
• Example (2) Advertisement of Michael Kors perfume.
• Example (3) Advertisement of the Emporio Armani ‘City Glam’ perfume.

Category II: Advertisements with a dominant textual message, ‘informative ads’.
• Example (1) Paul Mitchell ‘luxury hair care’ hair care products.
• Example (2) Advertisement of a hair-dye L’Oreal ‘Couleur Experte’.
• Example (3) Maximum Length Mascara ‘Lash XL’ Estee Lauder.

Category III: Advertisements where a word pun or a phonological pun is employed.
• Example (1) Ad for Alexander McQueen ‘My Queen’ perfume.
• Example (2) Mist Make-up ‘Airflash’ Dior.

Category IV: Advertisements where visual humour is employed.
• Example (1) Sunsilk hair products.

Category V: Advertisements which talk about human fears, complexes and imperfections – ‘solution ads’.
• Example (1) ‘Weightless Volume’ hair mousse Salon Solutions.
• Example (2) ‘Head and Shoulders’ shampoo.
• Example (3) St. Ives body lotion.

Category VI: Advertisements in which a celebrity advertises an international product.
• Example (1) ‘Very Irresistible’ Givenchy perfume.

Category VII: Ads in which an element of the supernatural or fantastical (imaginary) world is used.
• Example (1) ‘Alien’ Thierry Mugler perfume.
CHAPTER TWO

5. Analysis of data.

5.1 The textual vs. the visual medium in the Swedish edition of ‘ELLE’.

Category I: Advertisements with a celebrity advertising an international product, ‘visual ad’.

Example (1) Maybelline New York make-up products advertised by Marie Serneholts – singer.

The ad takes up two pages; a visual element (the picture of the singer covers three quarters of both pages). On the left page, bottom left corner there is a small picture of the cosmetics. Under and over them there are minimal textual elements – the upper one is a single sentence: ‘Marie Serneholts favoriter’. Next to this sentence there is a ‘handwritten’ signature (presumably of the singer). The text under the picture of the cosmetics is an enumeration of the names and prices of the products shown. The reader is made to believe that the singer uses these cosmetics and that she recommends them to us (readers). Usually, if a celebrity appears in an ad of cosmetics, the image of this person is the dominant element of the ad (this applies to both the English and the Swedish edition). The celebrity functions as a reinforcement and as a ‘reassurance’ – the famous person uses the product, so it is worth buying and reliable. The text in this particular ad has a very practical function – it gives names and prices of each product. The text doesn’t try to compel the reader directly to buy the products; it does not describe the effects the products might give (which are ubiquitous in such ads). It’s enough that the singer uses them and recommends them as her favourites.

Category II: Advertisements with a dominant textual element, ‘informative ads’.

Example (1) Scandinavian Formula hair products.

The advertisement consists of a textual element, which takes two thirds of the page. The top and the left margin of the page are covered with pictures of the logo and a picture of a woman with a hairstyle (the top of the page), and on the left pictures of the products. The text presents a very interesting form – it resembles a dialogue of a client and the producer. The producer is the ‘authority’, she/he gives advice to a client; each answer contains the name of one of the products, so that each product is presented and described at a time. In addition, at the bottom of the page, there is a piece of information where these products can be bought, a phone number and a website. The bottles on the left also contain elaborate information about the functions of each of them. The reader is given comprehensive knowledge about the brand; the products answer all the needs of a potential client.
Example (2) Max Factor ‘Flawless Perfection’ foundation

The advertisement takes up two pages, half of each page is covered in text, the two inner halves are picture, which together make one picture. It can be argued that the pictorial and the textual elements are equal in amount. The product is divided into two parts, which the text describes as two ‘steps’. One part of the text is called: ‘Make-up tips från Gino Tamagnini’, the other briefly describes the two ‘steps’ of applying the product. The picture shows a woman’s face next to a mirror, her reflection shows a pale ‘grey’ face, whereas the woman’s face in front of the mirror is well made-up and in healthy colours (after using the product). The whole ad gives detailed information about the effects of the product; it borrows its form from the stereotypical hair–dye ad (described in the previous chapter). I would argue that the producer assumes that more knowledge about a product means greater possibility of buying this product by the consumer.

Examples (3), (4) Clinique cosmetics – facials and lipsticks.

The two advertisements constitute a separate sub-category of ads aimed at a target–group with allergic illnesses. The textual element in both ads takes only 1/3 of the page, but it is this element that gives all of the relevant information to the reader. Since the cosmetics are made for allergies, the information must be detailed. The text presents each product thoroughly and explains the application in 3 ‘steps’ (for facials). Moreover, the name of the brand – Clinique gives information about the way the brand wants to be perceived by customers – as having to do with medical science (reliable), and production in sterile environment (clean and safe products). The text on the bottles of the facials is given in two foreign languages: English and French – a statement of internationality. It’s worth mentioning that all of Clinique’s ads have a white background – a sign of cleanness and of stereotypical colour of clinics, white. The lack of colourful background makes the reader focus on the picture of the product and on the textual element.

Example (5) Estee Lauder anti-wrinkle eye cream

(6) Biotherm anti-wrinkle face cream

(7) Lancome mascara ‘L’Extreme’

This group of ads has in common utilization of numbers and percentages to prove the effectiveness of the products. The first example – Estee Lauder anti-wrinkle eye cream employs numbers (“7x”) to explain the quickness of the product. The text makes a
comparison between the product and other products (of competitors), and asserts that it works seven times faster than the competitor’s. Despite the fact that a consumer cannot measure the effectiveness of the product by herself and confirm the quickness (“7x faster”), the use of numbers gives the ad an air of being scientifically tested and proved. Apart from the textual element, there are two pictures – one takes the whole right page of the ad, the second, smaller picture presents the product. The bigger picture shows three women of different skin colours and types – another case of expressing internationality of the product.

The second example – anti-wrinkle face cream by Biotherm ad uses a different tactic – instead of saying how fast the product is, it gives its effectiveness in percentage. Unlike in the first example, this ad does not compare its product to other ones (products); instead it enumerates the advantages of using the face cream and gives proof in percentage in bigger font in the centre of the page. The description of the cream is purely informative; it lacks figurative language, so ubiquitous in ads for, for example, perfume.

The third example is Lancome mascara ‘L’Extreme’. This ad also uses percentages to assure the reader of the reliability of the product. This time the informativeness of the ad is very limited – the textual element is very small in comparison with the visual one, which takes almost two pages. The text has the form of single ‘points’, a list of effects after the application. The percentage is given in the heading of the text and its font is enlarged. The producer has chosen to utilize numbers instead of a simpler message (‘your lashes will be longer’) to avoid banality and to intrigue the reader. The name of the product – L’Extreme - introduces a foreign language (French). The French origin of the product is manifested only in the name of the brand and of the product. The textual element is wholly in Swedish. Even though the text is minimal, I would argue that it still belongs to the category of ‘informative’ ads, because of the informative nature of the text.

Category III: Advertisements in which a pun or visual humour is employed.

Example (1) Nivea Self Tan Lotion (word pun)
The advertisement shows two women holding each other and smiling at the arrivals at an airport. Both of them have a deep tan. Each woman is ‘equipped’ with a textual ‘heading’ – one says ‘Solbrun från Ibiza’, the other ‘Solbrun med Nivea’. Under this picture the reader will find the picture of the product with a short description and a website. The humour in this ad comes from the comparison between the two women made in the text; it is through the text
that the pun comes into being. Even though the balance between the text and the picture is not kept (the visual element dominates), both elements of the ad cannot exist without each other and together constitute a complete message.

**Example (2) perfume for men ‘Armand Basi’**

It is rare to find an example of an ad for men’s perfume in a magazine targeted at women. The reasons for this might be that the editor of the magazine allows such an ad, because it advertises something that a female reader can give as a gift to her man or that it might be possible that the magazine has readers from the out-group (men, elderly people etc.). This ad is not only a deviation on the level of targeting but it also uses visual humour to make it even more interesting. The ad is a combination of two pictures and a heading – the bigger picture shows a young man with butterfly wings sitting next to a wall and the smaller picture shows the bottle of the perfume in a small size (shrunken). The heading over the pictures reads: ‘Armand Basi in blue, who wants to be conventional?’. The pun (as in the previous example) appears after the reader combines both the textual and the visual elements. The question in the heading is ridiculed by the picture; unconventionality is eccentricity not individuality in this ad.

**Category IV: Advertisements of genuine Swedish brands.**

**Example (1) Lumene mascara**

The advertisement includes a bigger picture of a woman, a smaller picture of the product and a text presenting the product. Despite the fact that this ad appears in the Swedish edition of ‘ELLE’ and is targeted at Swedish readers, it has elements of foreign (English) language – the heading at the top of the page: ‘The sky is the limit’ and under the logo at the bottom of the page: ‘Lumene, The Secret of Nordic Beauty’. Small parts of the text are in bold, they ‘stand out’ of the text (assumed important words, that the consumer should see first). The ad uses repetition – some words that are key to the ad appear in different places more than once – they reinforce the message of the ad and make sure that the reader will not miss what the producer wants to get across.

**Example (2) Olle & Marie – face and hair styling**

The advertisement consists of a picture of a woman’s face and of a heading. The heading gives the name of the beauty salon, the address and telephone number. At the bottom of the page there is the day and hour of opening of the salon. This small textual element does not
give any details about the product/brand/producer. It only introduces the names of the
designers. The textual element has been reduced to the absolute minimum; the picture is a sample of the offered services in the salon.

*Example (3) Face Stockholm – make-up salon*
As in the previous case, this ad also combines a whole – page visual element (a woman’s face) with an almost non–existent textual element (only the logo and the website). The picture is a presentation of the services and it does not have the ‘selling a product’ function of most ads in women’s magazines. The logo has an explanatory function; the reader is told that this ‘company’ deals with the face, but apart from this word the reader is left on his own to comprehend the message of the ad. The relationship between both elements of an advertisement is crucial in understanding it. There are cases, when the picture with a logo is enough to be a clear message. This applies to commercial products which are widely known and international. However, when national products, like in the examples above, are advertised in an international magazine like ‘ELLE’, even if it is directed at one nation (Sweden), the lack of explicit information in an ad might cause its misunderstanding. The issue of ‘unclear’ ads will be taken up in the next chapter.
5.2 The textual vs. the visual medium in the English edition of ’ELLE’.

Category I: Advertisements of perfume – the visual element dominates over the textual element. ’Visual ads’.

Example (1) Advertisement of the Calvin Klein ‘Euphoria’ perfume.
The ad takes two full pages; it consists of a picture of a woman on the right and a picture of a bottle of the advertised perfume on the left. The whole ad is in light brown colour – which gives it ‘warmth’. On the left, behind the bottle of the perfume we see a sunset in brown and copper colours. Text in this ad is almost non-existent, it only appears as the name of the perfume over the bottle, and under it as a phrase (‘a new fragrance’ Calvin Klein). In addition, the name of the perfume and of the producer can be read on the neck of the bottle. The whole right page is covered in the face of a woman; in the top left corner we see her again, only this time smaller and her face shows a feeling of ecstasy or euphoria (as the name of the perfume implies). It can be argued that the smaller picture of the same woman represents what is ‘in her head’, because the smaller picture is placed very close to the lady’s face. This proximity imposes on the viewer the impression of ‘one-ness’ of the whole picture. The woman and the bottle are one and the same thing – euphoria. The producer is trying to say: ‘apply this perfume and you will become like her’, and you will feel like her. The textual message seems to be omitted on purpose, because of the assumption that the one word – euphoria - is enough to explain the meaning of the advertisement. The reader, given so little textual information, is free to interpret the ad how she/he wants, according to one’s life experience and expectations. Even though the textual element is so small the aim of the ad is clear – the words ‘a new fragrance’ and the name of the producer, which is in bigger and thicker font, make the ad clear.

Such ads constitute a whole category; there can be presented many examples of ads with a very similar layout and relationship between text and picture.

Example (2) Advertisement of Michael Kors perfume.
The advertisement takes less space than the previous example, one page. It presents a naked woman (the bottom part of her face and upper part of the chest), lying on the ground, bed – we cannot see where. The background is white. In the top right corner there is the name of the producer and at the same time the name of the perfume; its hardly visible, because of the colours – the white logo is placed on the almost white background. In the bottom left corner there is the bottle of the perfume; its size is much smaller than the size of it in reality. Next to
it we see a sentence: ‘A chic, luxurious, sexy fragrance for women’. The colours of the ad reflect the colours of the bottle of perfume – white and beige. In the ad we cannot see the eyes of the woman, which makes her ‘anyone’ or ‘everyone’. The ad lacks details – it consists only of the part of a naked body on the white background and of the little bottle and the sentence in the foreground. The whole ad gives an impression of purity and minimalism. The phrase explains the aim of the ad – it’s a fragrance for women. Judging from the picture, the fragrance is for young women – the body of the woman is young and smooth. However, unlike in the last example, she is anonymous (we cannot see her whole face), and therefore more a ‘background’ and less a part of the ad.

Example (3) Advertisement of the Emporio Armani ‘City Glam’ perfume.
The advertisement takes two pages (as in the case of the first example). The left page shows a man and a woman – both of them are young and they are holding each other. On the right page in the top half there is the name of the perfume – City Glam. Its written in an extremely big and thick font (this is the first thing that catches the eye when one looks at the right page). Underneath the name there is a picture of two bottles of perfume – a pink one and a black one – the bottles stand close together, the writing on both of them together makes the logo and the name of the perfume. Under the two bottles there is a phrase: ‘Get together with two new fragrances’ and the name of the producer. The picture of the couple on the left page, the two bottles making up one text together and the phrase ‘get together’ are all representations of the same message – together; the advertisement uses the method of repetition to enforce the ‘power’ of the message and to make it absolutely clear.

All the three examples fall under the category of advertisements with a dominant pictorial element; all three are only in English. I would argue that in order to read the message of these ads and to get the ideology across to the reader the visual element is crucial and cannot be deleted. Without it the ad would make an impression of incompleteness and ambiguity in the negative sense. Moreover, since perfume’s fragrance cannot be described in words on paper, the producers take advantage of the picture in an ad and make it (the picture) ‘speak’ to us – readers instead of using textual message.

Category II: Advertisements with a dominant textual message. ‘Informative ads’.
Example (1) Paul Mitchell ‘luxury hair care’ – hair care products  
The advertisement consists of two pages; the right page is almost fully covered in text enumerating the advantages of the products, the left page shows a face of a smiling woman. What is more, besides the regular text, there are ‘circles’ with small texts, each ‘circle’ is ‘attached’ to one product (there are three). Each ‘circle’ includes information about the product and its price, amount in ml. The ‘circles’ are titled step 1, 2,3 – it is like a manual for the products. The heading of the ‘proper’ text reads: ‘Get Super Strong. 3 Steps to stronger Hair.’ The text gives detailed information about the products and the circles with 3 steps help the reader (and possibly the future customer) find out how to use the products and in which order. The picture of the woman on the left works only as ‘reinforcement’ – it does not bring anything important into the ad; her smile may be interpreted as a smile of a satisfied customer. In comparison with the earlier category, in which the picture plays a crucial role, here it has less impact on the viewer – its role is more limited; it is the text that is the medium of communication with the reader.

Example (2) Advertisement of a hair-dye L’Oreal ‘Couleur Experte’. 
The advertisement takes one page. The page is divided in two vertical halves – on the left we see three faces of women with three different hair colours, on the right there is a text which explains in two steps how to apply the colour. Under the text there is a round sign like an office stamp saying: ‘voted product of the year’ – a ‘proof’ of reliability of the product. Moreover, next to the text there are small pictures showing each stage of application of the colour. It is common knowledge that hair colouring is a process that involves several steps, therefore producers of such cosmetics are obliged to give clear and reliable information about how to apply the product. I would argue that due to the ‘nature’ of this product it is the best example, a prototype of an informative advertisement. Of course, there are other ads of other beauty products, like lipsticks or mascaras that borrow this pattern of ‘steps’ and informativeness to make the ads seem more reliable and ‘complicated’.

Example (3) Maximum Length Mascara ‘Lash XL’ Estee lauder  
The advertisement consists of two pictures and a small text. One picture takes up the whole right page, the small one and the text the left one.  

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4 This example is not included in the list of examples on page 10. It is quoted here only for the purpose of discussing it’s textual component.
two women and on the left a smaller picture of the mascaras (repetition of the same product) and over this picture a short text. The text has a heading: ‘Give lashes what they long for Lash XL, Maximum Length Mascara’. The text under the heading gives some information about the aim of the product, and, what is interesting, a promise that the lashes will be 50% longer. The use of percentage makes us think about more ‘technical’ or scientific texts; its appearance in an ad for a mascara works as a sign of reliability of the producer (that some facts about the product have been measured ‘scientifically’).

Examples in this category are to a different degree ‘informative’. Their role is to inform the reader in detail about the functions of the products. Some producers borrow this technique to advertise products, which do not need such elaborate explanations of use, to make a product seem more modern or connected with ‘science’. In the case of informative ads the picture, even if it’s much bigger than the text, is only a background, it does not carry any important information, and therefore can be called a ‘filler’ pictorial element.

**Category III: Advertisements where a word pun or a phonological pun is employed.**

**Example (1) Ad for Alexander McQueen ‘My Queen’ perfume.**
The advertisement consists of a picture of a beautiful woman wearing a glittering violet dress. She is sitting in a big armchair, which resembles a king’s throne. Behind the ‘throne’ we see a sunset in violet, pink and yellow. On the left there is a small text: ‘My Queen, The new feminine fragrance.’ On the bottom left, there is a small picture of the bottle of perfume (violet like the rest of the ad); under the bottle there is the name of the producer: Alexander McQueen. The ad utilizes a word pun – the name of the perfume and the name of the producer are almost identical, except for one letter. The picture also ‘takes part’ in decoding the meaning of the textual element. The three elements of the ad – the picture of the woman, the name of the product and of the producer constitute a ‘chain’, in which the word ‘queen’ is the common word, but each element of the ‘chain’ realizes this word in a slightly different manner. The ‘chain’ leads the reader to the product – perfume.

**Example (2) Mist Make-up ‘Airflash’ Dior.**
The advertisement presents the product – a bottle of make-up in the bottom left corner, whereas the rest of the page is filled with a face of a smiling woman – she is looking at the bottle with appreciation. At the top right there is the logo – Dior in big font and silver-like letters. In the middle of the page there is a phrase: ‘airbrushed perfection in a flash.’ At the
bottom of the page, next to the bottle, there is a short text. The text consists of three sentences with three headings in bigger font: ‘Revelation, Sensation and Perfection’. The most intriguing part of this ad is the sentence in the middle of the page – ‘airbrushed perfection in a flash’. The use of the sound ‘sh’ is very frequent in this sentence, it also resembles the sound of a spray, because the product is a spray. It can be said that in this ad the producer used a ‘phonological’ pun – the sentence which describes the product is at the same time a sound that this product makes when used.

The use of puns on the word level and on the phonological level is quite a popular technique. It gives an ad new quality and makes it more interesting for the reader. Humour, verbal or visual, is always appreciated in advertisements.

**Category IV: Advertisements where visual humour is employed.**

**Example (1) Sunsilk hair products**

A good example of visual humour is an advertisement of Sunsilk hair products called ‘Intense Blonde’ and ‘Intense Brunette’. The first ad, for the ‘Blonde’ products shows a scene at a university graduation; an elderly professor is kissing a young woman (a graduate) with shiny, long, blond hair. Everyone around (other professors) is surprised and shocked. The text above this scene says: ‘Intense Blonde, For unexpected results (…)’. Another example is an ad for ‘Intense Brunette’ hair products – a bridegroom is kissing a waitress at his wedding party, his wife is looking at this in horror. The waitress has shiny, dark brown hair. The text above says: ‘Intense Brunette, For unexpected results.’ Both ads make use of certain social taboos, turning them into jokes. The joke becomes clear when the reader reads the text above and sees tiny bottles of hair products next to the text. Visual humour often enriches ads that advertise ‘boring’ everyday products like shampoo, toothpaste, etc. Humour is the key to selling more products than the competitors, when the products of many brands are very similar and it is hard to think of new ways of selling them.

**Category V: Advertisements which talk about common human fears, complexes and imperfections – ‘solution advertisements’.**

**Example (1) ‘Expert care for flat, lifeless hair’.**

‘*Weightless Volume*, Salon Solutions (hair mousse)’

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5 This category is an additional one and is not added in the list of examples on page 10. The purpose of this additional category and the examples included in it is to discuss only the textual components of these examples.
The advertisement shows a woman with a perfect hairstyle. Next to her there is a bottle of hair mousse, under the bottle a text, which is stylized to resemble a personal letter – it starts with ‘Use my Weightless Volume (…) mousse […]’ and is signed with a ‘handwritten’ signature. This ‘personalization’ of the message gives an impression of a friend’s advice, which she/he sends to a reader of the ad. The ‘letter’ talks about the product (hair mousse) as a great solution to all hair problems.

Example (2) ‘Would you put dandruff in this picture?’

‘Head and Shoulders’ shampoo
The advertisement consists of a picture of a young boy and a young girl. Behind them there is an ocean wave, which is produced by the bottle of the shampoo at the bottom right of the page. The whole ad is in blue colour, which gives a feeling of freshness and cleanliness. Under the picture of the two young people there is a text explaining the purpose and the effectiveness (one hundred percent) of the product. The question on the top of the page: ‘Would you put dandruff in this picture?’ doesn’t need answering, because the answer is obvious. The whole ad is a manifestation of freshness and careless happiness.

Example (3) St. Ives body lotion
The advertisement contains a picture of a naked woman putting body lotion on her arm. The picture is slightly blurred, it functions only as a background. In the foreground there are three sentences in a thicker and bigger font on the left, on the right a picture of the body lotion, which is shrunken. The three sentences say: ‘Doesn’t rub off. Doesn’t wear out. Doesn’t let you down.’ These sentences function as reassurance – this product won’t let you down. Underneath there is more text in small font, it gives more detailed information about the product.

Category VI: Advertisements in which a celebrity advertises an international product.
Example (1) ‘Very Irresistible’ Givenchy perfume.
The perfume is advertised by Liv Tyler, an American actress. Her name is put in the top left corner under the logo of the producer. In the bottom right corner there is the bottle of the perfume (enlarged), next to it the name of the product and two sentences: ‘The New Sensual Eau de Parfum, very elegant, very fun, very you.’ The producer included French language in the textual element. One reason for that is to present a brand which originated in France. Another reason is that France is widely known for producing high quality perfume. Even
though the ad has nothing to do with France and is not aimed at a French target–group, the French language is kept to give an impression of ‘Frenchness’ and luxury. The person of the actress is one more reinforcement to promote the product.

*Category VII: Ads in which an element of the supernatural or fantastical (imaginary) world is used.*

*Example (1) ‘Alien’ Thierry Mugler perfume*

The ad consists of a picture of a woman stylized to look like an alien. She holds a bottle of the perfume in her hand. On the other hand she has a shining sign – the word ALIEN. Beside her there is a question asking if ‘you believe in the Extraordinary?’ At the bottom of the page there is a sentence: ‘The new perfume by Thierry Mugler.’ This advertisement is unusual – it takes up one of the mysteries of the (un)inhabited universe. It also appeals to our desire to be unique and extraordinary. The two ‘desires’ are combined to give the reader a surprise and to make her/him interested in the ad.

Advertisers gain motifs for their advertisements from many sources. Some typical usable motifs are mythology, legends, science fiction and movies. In ads for cosmetics in woman’s magazines (like ‘ELLE’) UFOs, for example, and aliens are not a very common motif, however, they may be found and are very interesting cases of advertising. I would categorize this kind of ads as ‘unexpected ads’; in the sense that the motif borrowed for the ad (aliens) is not a common one and is not commonly associated with selling cosmetics.

To sum up, the advertisements in the English edition of ‘ELLE’ present a wide variety of categories. Banal, everyday products are shown in many innovative ways – with the textual or the visual element in dominance, using humour or word puns, appealing to our desires and fantasies and giving advice. In the great majority of cases only English is used, the only exceptions are the products of French origin (minimal French element in the textual element). Most ads focus first on pleasing and making the consumer happy and satisfied and after that they mention such factors as usefulness or reliability. It seems that for British consumers it is the pleasure of using the product that comes first and after that other factors, such as reliability. Seventeen out of nineteen ads put pleasure on the first place, and then other factors, such as reliability.
5.3 Metaphors in the Swedish edition of 'ELLE'

Before the examples of metaphors in the Swedish ads are discussed, I would like to point out two major obstacles with which a reader may be faced, namely ‘unclear’ ads, and in and out group reading of an advertisement.

1. Unclear ads.

The Swedish edition of ‘ELLE’, similarly to the English one, attracts the reader’s attention with multiple kinds of advertisements. The advertisements can be divided into two broad categories: translations of international advertisements (mostly from English to Swedish) – partial and full; and advertisements of national Swedish products/brands. This division into international and national ads plays a very important role when one takes into consideration the factor of ‘clearness’ of ads.

The unclearness of the advertisement can be caused by
- unclear visual element
- unclear textual element
- unclear combination of both elements

2. In–group and out–group reading of ads.

The member of the in–group (target–group) is presented with two kinds of ads – translations and ‘national’ ads. The national ads for the members of that nation (for example Sweden) shouldn’t be problematic to read, unless the advertiser uses a foreign language in the ad (English, French) or she/he limits the textual message to such an extent that the logo of the product/brand becomes the only textual referent.

If the reader belongs to the out–group, the reading becomes more complicated, especially as far as the national ads are concerned (the product/brand is not commercial, popular, the textual element is limited to the logo, or the language of the textual element is foreign to the reader).
Category IV: Example (3) ‘Face Stockholm’ make-up salon
The advertisement gives the reader only two textual references to the brand – the logo and the website. The ad doesn’t advertise a particular product, it’s rather an ‘invitation’ and a sample of the available services in the salon (the picture presents a made-up face of a woman). However, for a foreign reader or a person who doesn’t visit such salons, the ad with such a limited text may be unclear, because there is no information about the purpose of the ad. The word ‘face’ is the only ‘hint’ that the advertiser gives to the reader.

Category IV: Example (2) ‘Olle & Marie’ face and hair salon
This example is even more ‘unclear’, because the advertiser doesn’t give any textual ‘hint’ in the advertisement about the purpose of the ad. The only textual element is the name of the brand/company, the address, telephone number and the hours of opening. The visual element plays the part of reference – the face of a made-up woman with a fashionable hairstyle. However, because of the lack of the ‘pictorial code’ the picture can be interpreted in many ways, also in the way differing from the intended by the advertiser. Therefore, this ad, as well as the previous one, can be categorized as ‘unclear’.

3. A particular view of reality – similarities and differences between the Swedish and the English editions of ‘ELLE’.

Category I: Example (3) Clinique lipstick

Category IV: Example (1) Lumene mascara
’ (…) Sky – Fi mascara formula innehåller skyddande blåbär och elastiska fibrer som i varje applicering gör dina fransar avsevärt längre, starkare och fylligare. (…)’

Example: Schwarzkopf “Gliss” shampoo
Category III: Example (1) Nivea Self Tan Lotion

‘Nivea Sun Touch Self Tan Lotion. Extra fuktighetsgivande för ett jämnt och naturligt resultat.’

Advertisements in the Swedish edition of ‘ELLE’ share a similar view of reality with the English one, except small, linguistic differences in the textual element. The ‘Swedish’ ads focus more on the effectiveness and functionality of the products than on the pleasure of using them and on the ‘emotional’ effects the product may give to the user. In comparison, the ‘English’ ads guarantee the reader, that she will look and feel chic, sexy, elegant, etc. in ads for many cosmetics; the ‘Swedish’ ones often focus more on the functions than on the emotions. Apart from this difference, there are no more striking contrasts between ads from both editions.

The contrast functionality vs. emotions/pleasure is also reflected in metaphors used in ‘Swedish’ ads:

Clinique lipstick: THE PRODUCT IS A PERSON
Lumene mascara: LONGER IS BETTER
‘Gliss’ shampoo: APPLICATION IS REPARATION


Highlighting, in both editions, reflects the hierarchy of importance of information for the advertiser. If she/he wants to assure the reader/consumer that it is the effectiveness that is most valuable in the product, then this information will be highlighted:


source domain – sky
SKY IS UP> SKY IS MORE> MORE IS BETTER

The advertiser uses only one component of the source domain SKY – height/length. The rest of the semantic components are omitted. The focus of the ad is on the LENGTH of the lashes.
5. Emotional branding – pleasure and other emotions elicited by brands.\textsuperscript{6}

Emotional branding is realized in the ‘Swedish’ ads mostly on the level of physical ‘pleasure’ – the lipstick is creamy and smooth, the skin will be smooth after applying the body lotion, etc. It’s hard to find ads, which talk strictly about emotional pleasure coming from using the product (which is omnipresent in ‘English’ ads). The reason for this contrasting realization can be the cultural coherence, different world experience or different needs of customers in both countries (this distinction is also visible in metaphors in ads). The English want to read about products, which give the sense of happiness and exceptionality, the Swedes want to know what the product does and if it is reliable. Of course, there are exceptions from this division, but they are rare. In the group of seventeen advertisements in the Swedish issue of ‘ELLE’ only one talks strictly about emotional pleasure connected with using the product (the ad is in English, the product is international). In the English edition in the group of nineteen advertisements only two inform the reader about the functions of the product, avoiding emotional branding.

These findings are, of course, very limited (only one issue – from November 2005), but nevertheless a difference in advertising strategy is visible.

6. Metaphors are exaggerations.

The ‘Swedish’ advertisements also like the ‘British’ use exaggeration to highlight the advantages of the products:

Clinique lipstick:
‘Ny look. Ny lyxigt cremig glans. (…) Cliniques revolutionerande formula ger glans som ett gloss och känns behagligt som ett läppstift. Återfuktar läpparna och gör dem silkesmjuka med läckra, cremiga färgar. ‘

Nivea make-up (foundation):
‘Ny formula som ger ett perfekt resultat I upp till 12 timmar (…) Superfinå färgpigment täcker och jämnar ut.
Matchar din egen naturliga hudton perfekt.

\textsuperscript{6} For more information about emotional branding see Koller Metaphor and gender in business media discourse (2004), New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Estee Lauder under-eye anti-wrinkle cream:
Glöm det som varit. En bättre nutid. En perfekt framtid.’

Lumene mascara:
‘Himmelska fransar – i ett ögonblick
The sky is the limit.’

7. ‘The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.’ (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 10)

Swedish, as well as English advertisers rely heavily on metaphors when it comes to attracting the reader’s attention and compelling them to buy all kinds of products. Metaphors are present in ads for shampoo, mascara, lipstick, perfume, etc. Products become weapons, healers, protectors. Metaphor gives enormous possibilities of constructing new mappings and new meanings: a cosmetic can become something more than a thing – it can gain new purposes for the customer. Understanding one experience in terms of another is a widespread method realized in advertisements in both editions of the magazine.

8. Personification.

Personification is present in the ‘Swedish’ ads. The features of human beings are projected onto the advertised product:

‘Nya Lumene Sky – Fi Volume
Mascara uppfyller dina drömmar om - the product fulfills your dreams
perfekt långa vackra ögonfransar.’

Nivea foundation (…) ger din hy lyster - the product gives your skin new lustre

Usually, the advertisers make the product the ‘person’, who ‘does’ its functions to us – customers. Sometimes this technique is replaced with the use of the personal pronoun ‘I’:
Lancome mascara:
‘Jag förlänger mina fransar med up till 60%.’

The personal pronoun ‘I’ is quite rare in advertisements of the Swedish edition; in the studied group of ‘Swedish’ ads I found only one such case.


Schwarzkopf shampoo:
‘Vi vet precis vad ditt hår vill ha.’ - HAIR FOR THE PERSON

Schwarzkopf Poly Blonde:
‘Perfekt blond. Poly Blonde.’ - perfect blond - HAIR COLOUR FOR HAIR

Nivea foundation:
‘Nyhet! Stay Real – från Nivea Beaute.’ - THE NAME OF THE PRODUCT FOR PRODUCT

Nivea Self Tan Lotion:
‘Solbrun med Nivea’. – THE NAME OF THE PRODUCER FOR THE PRODUCT

Metonymy allows the reader to ‘focus more specifically on certain aspects of what is being referred to’ (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 37). Therefore, in the ad for a self–tan the person who is tanned is referred to as ‘sun-tan with Nivea’, the new make-up by Nivea is referred to as ‘Stay Real’, the coloured hair as ‘perfect blond’. Hair stands for the person who knows what she wants.
5.4 Metaphors in the English edition of ‘ELLE’.

1. A particular view of reality.

All the examples of advertisements discussed in the chapter ‘The textual vs. the visual medium in the English edition of ‘ELLE’’ present a particular view of reality. It may be argued that this view of reality is a reflexion of the needs, desires and fears of the readers belonging to the target–group. It is also true that it is the advertisers who are the designers of the message in an ad and therefore impose on the readers a certain worldview. The imposed worldview can create stereotypes and scripts, which don’t have to mirror reality in full or which can create new meanings and connotations. Metaphor is a linguistic tool, which leads to new meanings. Advertisers utilize new or unconventional mappings to capture reader’s attention:

*Category II: Example (1) Paul Mitchell Luxury Hair Care*

**HAIR CARE IS WAR/FIGHT**

‘Hair is under attack. The environment, heat styling, colouring and bleaching can all take their toll. Paul Mitchell fighters back with new Super Strong – a three part strengthening system for your hair’.

**THE PRODUCT IS A TOOL TO FIGHT BACK/WEAPON**

‘Super Strong Daily Shampoo, Daily Conditioner and Treatment can help strengthen hair – with Paul Mitchell Super Strong you have the tools to fight back.’

**THE PRODUCT IS A HEALING DEVICE**

‘The vegetable proteins penetrate the cortex to help moisturize and strengthen the hair. Helps strengthen weak or damaged hair (…).’


*Category II: Example (3) Estee Lauder Lash XL Mascara*

**LASHES ARE BEINGS WITH FEELINGS**

‘Give lashes what they long for.’

**THE PRODUCT IS UNREAL**
‘Now get extremely long, way-out-there lashes that defy reality.

Category IV: Sunsilk Intense Blonde hair products

USING THE PRODUCT IS REVEALING

‘Whether natural, highlighted or colour treated hair, reveal the intensity of your colour with Sunsilk Lively Blonde.’

Category V: Example (3) St. Ives body lotion

THE PRODUCT IS A RELIABLE HELPER

‘Doesn’t let you down.’

LONGER EFFECTS ARE BETTER

‘With St. Ives 24 Hour Moisturizer, the softness doesn’t stop.’

USING THE PRODUCT MEANS TAKING A 3-STEP PATH

‘Moisturize. Replenish. Retain.’

2. ‘Metaphor highlights certain semantic components of the source domain and omits others’. (Koller 2004)

One of the key features of metaphor is highlighting of certain elements of a domain and omitting others. For example, if we look again at the metaphor HAIR CARE IS WAR/FIGHT, the only elements of the source domain, which are highlighted are ATTACK, FIGHTING BACK and WEAPON, whereas other elements, such as casualties, anger are omitted, because these elements ‘are inconsistent with that metaphor’ (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 10). Metaphor compresses meaning in a few words. This linguistic ‘economy’, to my mind, functions as a ‘trigger’ for imagination of the reader of an ad, so that the smaller amount of explicitly given information opens many possibilities of interpretation based on one’s experience.

3. Mapping of features from a source to a target domain.

If a meaning cannot be expressed in a straightforward manner, literally, and it is easier to comprehend the meaning in terms of another experience, mapping can be used. If an
The advertiser wants to convince a potential customer, that her/his product has powerful effect and is able to eliminate, for example, an illness, the producer can ‘borrow’ some aspects of a different domain (like war) to talk about the domain of illnesses. The advertiser can use mapping to formulate a statement, which will describe the product, for example, in terms of a ‘weapon’ against the ‘enemy’ – the illness.

Utilization of metaphorical mapping helps to avoid banality in advertisements. It gives the message more ‘power’ of conviction and highlights those features of the product that are essential both for the producer and for the customer. In case of products which eliminate illnesses (like medications), the focus is on the effectiveness and quickness, whereas other elements of the target domain, such as the colour of the packaging or size are omitted as irrelevant.

4. ‘Media communication is monologic’ (Koller 2004)

It is necessary to keep in mind, that advertisements in women’s magazines are targeted at enormous groups of people of different life experience and social position. Moreover, the ‘voice’ that ‘speaks’ to the readers is unidirectional. The reader cannot participate in a dialogue with the advertiser and therefore communication is very limited. The process of designing an ad for a target–group is complicated and faces many difficulties. We have to take into account, that a target–group, in this case the readers of the British edition of ‘ELLE’, might be immigrants from different parts of the world with different cultural heritage. The advertiser, in order to successfully sell his product in Britain, must find such linguistic expressions and visual components for her/his ad, that will be comprehensible for the whole target–group (young women). Lakoff and Johnson in ‘Metaphors We Live By’ state that:

‘The most fundamental values in a culture will be coherent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in culture.’ There are basic metaphorical structures that advertisers can build upon without risking ambiguity or uncleanness, because ‘in general the major orientations up-down, in-out, central-peripheral, active-passive, etc., seem to cut across all cultures (…)’.

5. Emotional branding (Koller 2004)

Nowadays, advertisements are abundant with emotions. This applies especially to ads in women’s magazines like ‘ELLE’. The advertisers compel their female customers to buy products in a very ‘soft’ and emotional ‘voice’. Pleasure, satisfaction and happiness are the
key words for advertisers; a product is not accepted if it doesn’t give any kind of pleasure (physical or emotional):

*Example: Dior Rouge Velvet lipstick (physical pleasure)*

‘A new velvet sensation, a new powder finish. 6 shades, exceptionally radiant and sensual. Lips signed by Dior.’

*Category I: Example (2) Michael Kors perfume (emotional pleasure)*

‘A chic, luxurious, sexy fragrance for women.’

These two examples contain metaphors based on the ‘pleasure’ element:

SENSATION IS A TANGIBLE OBJECT – SOFT; VELVETY
SENSATION IS A PERSON THAT IS SENSUAL
FRAGRANCE IS A CHIC, LUXURIOUS, SEXY WOMAN

In the first example, metaphor is utilized to describe the act of application of the product; in the second one to enumerate all the advantages of the product, which, after the application, are projected onto the person (user) – the person becomes chic, luxurious and sexy.

6. Metaphors as exaggerations (Koller 2004)

Metaphors in advertisements can create exaggerations. Due to the fact, that competition in the cosmetic trade is enormous, advertisers choose to exaggerate the advantages of the products in order to make them seem better than the others:

*Category II: Example (3) Estee Lauder Lash XL Mascara*

‘Now get extremely long, way – out – there lashes that defy reality. ElongEX extends natural lashes to supernatural lengths – up to 50% longer. Super Traxon Brush separates, defines and lengthens beyond belief. It’s great to exaggerate.’

7. ‘The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another’ (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:10).
In the cosmetic trade there are certain products that are easy or difficult to advertise. In the case of day–to–day products, like face-creams, toothpaste or shampoo, the advertiser usually praises the effectiveness/quickness of the product, because this group of products has practical rather than beautifying purpose. Things become more complicated when one is faced with advertising a product like perfume. It is hard to describe the smell of perfume to readers, who have very limited knowledge of the substances used for the production of perfume. Therefore a technical description wouldn’t be a good idea to use when promoting a commercial product. Instead it is the metaphor that advertisers ‘speak’ with to describe the smell, and, more often, the effect of using certain perfume.

*Category VI: Example (1) ‘Very Irresistible’ Givenchy perfume*

‘The new Sensual Eau de Parfum. Very elegante, very fun, very you.’

This textual element of the ad says nothing about the smell of the perfume it advertises. Instead, it talks about the person that the perfume is made for. It may also describe how a user of this product can be perceived by her environment (as an elegant, funny person). In my opinion, perfume advertisements are the best example of the utilization of metaphors, as understanding one experience in terms of another.

8. Personification.

*Category V: Example (3) St. Ives body lotion*

‘Doesn’t let you down.’

*Category V: Example (1) ‘Weightless Volume’ hair mousse*

‘(…) ultra light formula (…)’ *gives* ‘you fuller looking hair that’s full of life.’

Personification is a method of making the product ‘speak’ for itself; it becomes a ‘being’ who can help you and who does not let you down. Giving it a human–like trait – reliability or ability to help you highlights the function of the product.


*Category II: Example (3) Estee Lauder Lash XL Mascara*

PART OF THE BODY FOR THE PERSON
‘Give lashes what they long for.’

Category I: Example (2) ‘Michael Kors’ Michael Kors perfume
PRODUCER FOR THE PRODUCT
‘A chic, luxurious, sexy fragrance for women.’

Category II: Example (2) L’Oreal hair – dye
THE COLOUR OF THE HAIR FOR THE HAIR
‘Personalized multi–tonal colour as unique as you are.’

Lakoff and Johnson define metonymy as a process when

‘one entity is being used to refer to another. Metaphor and metonymy are different kinds of processes. Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding. Metonymy, on the other hand, has primarily a referential function, that is, it allows us to use one entity for another.’

Metonymy is less frequent than metaphor in the examples discussed in the previous chapters. However, similarly to metaphor, it reinforces the message of the advertisement by highlighting certain aspects of a product by focusing on a part of it (part standing for the whole) or referring to a product named after the producer (product for the producer).

10. Absence of pictorial ‘code’ – many ways to read a picture.

There is a large category of advertisements, which lack an explicit textual element, or there are cases when the text is limited to the name of the product and/or the name of the producer. When the textual message is non–existent, the reader is left to decode the message of an advertisement from the visual element. ‘Visual’ advertisements are ubiquitous in cases of commercial and luxurious products, whose names are well–known and popular (at least for the members of the target–group). Usually, if a product is very famous, its name is enough to properly decode the ad. Very frequently, even if the product is famous, the producer gives ‘hints’ to the reader, just in case she had problems with recognizing the brand:

Example: Dior Rouge Velvet
‘A new velvet sensation, a new powder finish. 6 shades, exceptionally radiant and sensual. 
Lips signed by Dior.’ (Under the text a picture of the lipstick; on the other page a picture of 
woman’s face with lips in the foreground.)

*Category I: Example (1) ‘Euphoria’ Calvin Klein perfume*

‘A new fragrance, Calvin Klein’ (Over the text a picture of the bottle.)

*Category I: Example (2) ‘Michael Kors’ Michael Kors perfume*

‘A chic, luxurious, sexy fragrance for women.’ (Next to the text a miniature of the bottle.)

*Category III: Example (1) ‘My Queen’ Alexander McQueen perfume*

‘My Queen, The new feminine fragrance.’ (To the right, bottom of the page, a miniature 
picture of the bottle.)
Conclusion

Metaphors are an interesting phenomenon, which forms a varied group. The examples studied prove, that advertisements containing metaphors can be categorised depending on many factors, such as the interaction of the textual and the visual elements and their contribution in forming a metaphor – together or separately; offering a particular view of reality (the view of reality in the advertisements of the British edition of ‘ELLE’ differs from the one in the Swedish edition); exaggeration in the textual element as reinforcement; personification (THE PRODUCT IS A PERSON WITH HUMAN CAPABILITIES); emotional branding (PRODUCT IS PLEASURE); highlighting of particular components of source domains (in the ‘Swedish’ ads the components connected with functionality, in the ‘English’ – pleasure on the emotional and physical level). In addition, advertisers utilize metonymy (PART FOR THE WHOLE) in the textual element.

The advertisements in the English edition of ‘ELLE’ are comparable with the ones in the Swedish one. However, there are a few characteristic features which distinguish the ads in the English edition:

- the ads with the dominating visual element (‘visual ads’) are in majority
- the information about the product (including the metaphors) focus more on the effect than on the functions
- the group of beautifying products (also perfume) is presented through the concept of pleasure (emotional and physical)
- ads with the longest textual elements belong to the category of ‘informative ads’; they are usually found in cases where the product has a complicated formula or there is a set of products, and the application involves a few ‘steps’. The best example of this category is an advertisement of a hair-dye.

On the other hand, in the ‘Swedish’ advertisements:

- the reader is, first of all, informed about the functions of the product and then about the pleasure the product might give. Sometimes the ‘pleasure’ element is omitted and effectiveness is elaborated on instead (‘Himmelska fransar – I ett ögonblick.’)
- the level of ‘informativeness’ of the ‘Swedish’ ads is higher than the ‘English’ ones
- some advertisements belonging to the category of ‘visual ads’ fail to get their message across, because of minimal textual message (only the logo). Such advertisements can be called ‘unclear ads’ (see examples ‘Face Stockholm’ and ‘Olle & Marie’)
- other linguistic devices, such as metonymy and personification can also be found in the ‘Swedish’ ads

In sum, both editions present a great variety of advertisements in which metaphors play an important part. Many textual elements of ads are built upon metaphors (PRODUCT IS A HUMAN WITH CAPABILITIES) like on scaffoldings; the metaphors used are based on common human experience. Therefore, I agree with Lakoff and Johnson, that ‘metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.’
List of references

Chandler, D. *Semiotics for beginners, Encoding/Decoding*. www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem08c.html.


